

III. RADIO

A. Facilities and Control

- 207 The development of radio networks in East China followed a series of official directives. Upon the establishment of the Peking regime in 1949, the Common Program, which formed the basis of Communist China's Constitution, specified that "People's radio and publication work shall be developed."³⁶ A central agency in charge of radio administration was established in Peking. In April 1950 the information administration at Peking issued a directive on the "establishment of a radio broadcast receiving network." The provincial and special administrative district authorities in East China issued in the same year their instructions on the establishment of broadcast receiving networks. According to these announcements, the radio networks (broadcasting as well as receiving) were to come under the joint jurisdiction of the local People's government, the Communist Party's local branch, and the regional radio station which directly received instructions from the Central People's Radio Station in Peking. After the "regional" administrations were abolished in 1954, it is presumed, provincial and municipal radio stations receive direct instructions from Peking, but they are still

36. The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1949, p. 18.

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• 207 subject to control by local People's governments and the Communist Party's branch offices.

The mutiple system of control is necessary in the eyes of the Communists, because the Peking regime has made it amply clear that radio is one of the most effective instruments of mass education to prepare the masses for the "socialist construction of China."

One characteristic of radio control in China and in other Communist countries is its extent, covering not only the broadcasting networks but receiving stations as well. Organizing "receiving stations" may serve two purposes: one is to ameliorate the shortage of facilities, the other is to insure that available facilities are used in a manner approved by the government. The services of private owners of radios are enlisted by the government to expand the radio network. These owners are called "friends of radio." They receive free program announcements from the government and some free maintenance services. In turn they are expected to reciprocate by reporting the listener's reactions to the government. Each of these privately owned radios may serve as a receiving station, or as a base for a listeners' group, if the owner is willing. In addition, the Communist authorities have been trying to place enough sets in the hands of trained cadres who will man the official receiving stations.

The receiving stations are established on the hsien (county), city, hsiang (group of villages) and, at certain places, down to the individual

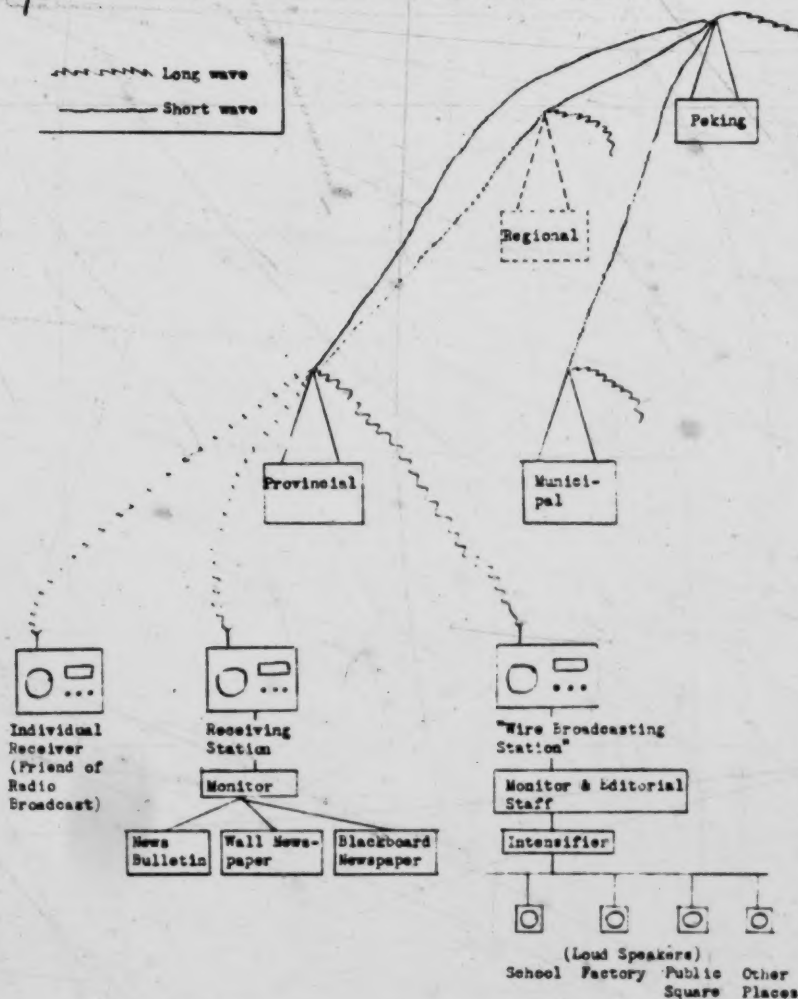
•207 village level. Within a larger city, more than one station may be maintained on the public square, at the public library, in schools, government offices, factories, and other industrial institutions. Outlying industrial and mining districts also have them. The Communists assign high priority to the development of receiving stations in industrial centers as an essential measure dovetailed with the over-all propaganda system. Each complete receiving station is equipped with a radio set and manned by a monitor (called a "receiving officer") who records news and other important broadcasts, and a technician who is responsible for the maintenance of the set.

As a supplement to the receiving stations, whose audiences are limited in number, there are public address systems either directly hooked up to the radio receivers or operated separately. The Communists call these systems "wire broadcast" (one type of radio diffusion exchange) in contradistinction to "wireless." When a "wire broadcasting" station is operated separately, the receiving officer organizes a separate program based on the news and important broadcasts he has monitored. To these materials he adds whatever answers to local needs. In a large factory, the public address system may have a number of loud speakers distributed among the departments on the premises.

The receiving officer at a station without supplementary public address systems is usually required to run a news bulletin. The frequency of issuing the bulletin may range from daily to semi-weekly, and the method of publication also varies

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Similar receiving arrangements are repeated at all levels.

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- 207 according to the location of the station and the audience it serves. Whatever limitation of supplies dictates, the radio receiving officer may also be required to run a "blackboard newspaper" which is nothing more than a conspicuously placed blackboard on which are summarized the news items he has monitored.

A few terms in connection with the Communist radio work may be somewhat puzzling to the Western observer. Lieh-ch'e Kuang-po [broadcast on the train] is a "wire broadcasting" system installed on a train for the benefit of the passengers. T'u Kuang-po [native broadcast] and Wu-ting Kuang-po [rooftop broadcast] are Communist cadres shouting through megaphones (trumpet funnels) the monitored news items. When they do so at a street corner, they are performing "native broadcasting." If they appear on the rooftops they constitute a "rooftop broadcast." These cadres are identified with "propaganda officers," about whom more will be said later. All these forms of broadcasting are in use in East China

The relationship between these broadcasting stations and receivers and the chain of control can best be demonstrated in the chart following:

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Recent statistics on radio facilities in East China are not available. Earlier reports, however, show that this region had the largest concentration of radio stations and receiving equipment among all the areas in China. In the city of Shanghai alone, there were two government stations and 22 private station³⁷ in 1951. A year later, as the government stations expanded their operation and radio control began to assert itself, three private stations went off the air and three others were merged with their competitors; thus only 16 stations were still maintained by private interest in Shanghai in 1952.³⁸

37. Hsia Yen (chief of the Cultural Bureau of the Shanghai Municipal Government), "Shanghai Wen-chiao Kung-tso Kai-k'uang Yu Chin-hou Jen-wu" ["Cultural and Educational Work and Its Future Mission in Shanghai"], Compendium of Government Reports, p. 612.

38. Jen-min Shou-ts'e, 1952 [People's Handbook, 1952], Shanghai, Ta-kung pao, 1952, p. 436.

Table 7. Independent Radio Broadcasting Stations
in Shanghai (1952) */

<u>Name</u>	<u>Kilocycles</u>
Ya-mei, Lin-chi	670
Yuan-ch'ang	750
Ho-chung	750
Ta-lu, Ta-chung-hua	930 and 92,332
Hu-cheng	1,070
Ta-hu	1,070
Tung-fang, Hua-mei	1,310 and 65,490
Min-sheng	1,340
Chung-hua-tzu-yu	1,340
Ta-chung	1,370
Chiu-chiu	1,370
Chin-tu	1,400
Chien-ch'eng	1,430
Hsin-sheng	1,430
Ta-chung-kuo	1,460
Ya-chou	1,490

- 207 By late 1953, government interests had invaded more than ten of the private broadcasting companies in Shanghai, and it is doubtful if there are any totally independent stations left in that East China metropolis.³⁹ Among the government stations the East China Regional People's Broadcasting Station, operating on 800, 5,985, and 9,730 kilocycles, presumably has been relegated to a provincial status to serve Kiangsu Province upon the abolishment of the Greater Administrative Region political subdivisions in China in 1954. Although caution has been voiced by Communist officials against "blind expansion of radio networks," there are indications that more government stations, possibly at least one major station to each province, have been established since 1952. But, instead of continuing with the construction of more broadcasting stations, the emphasis has been rather on the development of receiving stations in the industrial cities in East China. In October 1951 Communist China had altogether 2,254 such stations in the cities.⁴⁰ This number increased to 3,519 by March 1954.⁴¹ In East China even the smallest hsien in the most inaccessible area has at least one receiving station, and there is frequent mention in the East China press of reactions to these stations by worker-audiences.

B. Operation and Audience

The programs of these broadcasting stations

39. Chin Ta-k'ai, loc. cit.

40. Jen-min Hua-pao (People's Pictorial), Peking, Oct. 1951.

41. Jen Chung, loc. cit.

- 207 are organized to deliver and explain a political message to the audience. The pattern is fixed and changes in content occur only at the command of the central authority. If the current issue is "Resist-America-Aid-Korea," then the programs are permeated with anti-American propaganda. If it is "Production Emulation to Greet Labor Day," then every speech or news item has something to do with labor models and labor "heroes." The following is a survey of the features described as "important" by the East China Regional People's Broadcasting Station and the Shanghai Municipal People's Broadcasting Station:

• 207 Table 8. Percentage of Important in East China Radio Programs */

<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>Regional Station</u>	<u>Municipal Station</u>
	(in per cent)	
Popular Science. . .	48.6	20.0
International situation	24.3	6.8
Political and Economic affairs	2.8	5.1
Life of peasants and workers.	2.5	13.1
Industrial and comm'l progress	10.8	22.8
Thought reform.	2.9	5.8
Children's programs	0	13.8
Three-Anti Campaign	2.7	5.2
Program broadcast in local dialects	0	5.7
Water conservation	5.4	1.7

*/ Based on program announcements in the June 1952 issues of the Liberation Daily.

Popular science programs include lectures on public health and sanitation designed to give the audience a basic knowledge of common diseases and their prevention. Both stations in Shanghai in June 1952 were engaged in propaganda, their main subject being the so-called "germ-warfare" supposedly waged by American troops in Korea. Items bearing on the international

207 situation stressed the Soviet peace movement, with frequent reference to the "Resist-America-Aid Korea" Movement. The talks on political and economic affairs voiced Communist theories and policies, rendered in terms understood by the average citizen of East China. Because the Communists at this stage prefer not to explain ideology in the abstract, this part of the programs is comparatively light. At the hours assigned to telling stories about the life of the peasants and workers living under a Communist regime, program directors interview workers from farms and factories who relate their own experiences. The farmer tells of how happy he was when he received a tractor. The lathe operator gives an account of the recreational facilities in his factory, made available by the generosity of Mao Tse-tung. The shopkeeper explains how he learned to read at one of the public night schools. The Municipal Station which serves the immediate vicinity of Shanghai features more programs of this sort than does the Regional Station which serves a larger and more varied audience.

The extensive coverage of industrial and economic progress includes items on production records, "heroic feats" by labor models, and the development of co-operative stores. The thought-reform program is generally aimed at the youth; at least, it was so in June 1952. College and occasionally high-school students appear on this program to explain how they freed themselves from "bourgeois and feudalistic" ideas. The Regional Station refrains from presenting children's programs and leaves them to the municipal and

- 207 and other stations of local nature. Music and songs eulogizing the country and Mao Tse-tung constitute the bulk of children's programs; the remainder consist of stories exhorting the young listeners to behave themselves like "good children of the Communist Party." Adapted fairy tales, of both Chinese and Western origin, are offered to the young audience.

The Three-Anti Campaign was not the central issue in June 1952; the emphasis was placed on increasing production. Programs having direct bearing on the Movement, therefore, did not consume too much radio time. Like children's programs, features in dialect for minority nationalities are the concern of local stations. The programs devoted to the publicizing of water conservation projects on the Municipal Station is apparently limited by the fact that Shanghai continually bristles with industrial activities, and stories on industrial developments crowd out the by-now familiar accounts of the Hwai River and lower Yellow River projects.

In addition to regularly scheduled features, the usual pattern of the programs also includes music, drama and Chinese traditional opera, all tailored to support the central theme of the day. News briefs are given the same treatment as they are in the press. It is worth noting that European classical music has not been completely barred from the programs. The Shanghai Municipal Station, for instance, featured the works of Beethoven. A special program to teach Russian was inaugurated by the East China Regional Station in 1952. According to the announcement, the action was taken by

- 207 popular request after more than 14,000 listeners registered a wish to learn the language.⁴² This program was designed to serve audiences of three language levels -- beginner, intermediate, advanced -- three times each day for each level, totaling three and a half hours.

Other provincial and municipal stations re-broadcast verbatim important regional programs. Announcers normally use Mandarin. No commercials or dramatic serials are broadcast; calisthenics lessons are usually presented every morning and musical programs are broadcast at convenient hours so that audiences may gather to sing songs. Literacy hours are also featured on some stations; small groups are organized to follow these programs in order to gain facility in reading.

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208 C. Application and Effectiveness of Radio as a Propaganda Medium

The Communists in East China claim that their radio networks, with the minor shortcomings noted, have been a success. To examine this claim critically, it is necessary to take into consideration the observations outlined below.

1. Station Control. The control of broadcasting stations has been thorough, even in a place like Shanghai where private interests may still maintain a toehold in radio operation. However, since every aspect of radio is closely supervised by the government and the Party, the

42. Liberation Daily, June 15, 1952 p. 3.

207entire system soon showed signs of the weakness-
208es that generally bedevil an unwieldy bureaucracy. Every move originates from Peking and meticulously follows the orthodox Party line. No station manager is allowed to use his own initiative; if he tries, he will be accused of deviation and subject to extreme penalties.

207 2. Expansion of radio. Lack of facilities remains a stumbling block to radio expansion. In addition to such measures as "wire broadcasting stations," radio news bulletins, blackboard and wall newspapers, the Communists in East China are sending radio teams to the countryside. These mobile teams carry radio sets with them and, upon reaching a village, organize listening groups to hear some of the special programs. This measure has proven effective when the Communists have a special campaign to carry out.

While impressive results may have been achieved during such campaigns, lack of facilities makes success necessarily sporadic. The Communists admit that: (a) The listening groups are not very well-organized, for they die out as soon as they are formed. (b) The programs are not closely related to the issues foremost in the minds of the audience in the various localities. (c) There is an acute shortage of radio personnel to carry out successfully the mission assigned by the Regional Station. (d) Local radio personnel fail to keep close contact with their superiors, and the blame for this lack of co-ordination must be shared by both parties. (e) Local governments, particularly those of outlying hsien, are not sufficiently aware of the importance of radio work, and much

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●207 that could be accomplished has therefore been neglected.

3. Need of trained personnel. The Communists in this region assign only trusted Party members to key positions in the radio network, but there are apparently not enough well-trained personnel (technical and otherwise) to meet the need. As a result, each provincial broadcasting station has been conducting a personnel training program. While much may have been done to improve them, these training programs were begun in 1950-51 with a great deal of unsound expediency. Many of the radio receiving officers are given only two months' training. During this short period, these candidates were supposed to "elevate the level of their political understanding and formulate a new revolutionary outlook on life." Actually, some of these trained receiving officers failed even to acquaint themselves with Mandarin, resulting in complaints against their inability to understand the messages broadcast from Peking or from provincial stations. Radio technicians are, in most cases, given a six-month training course. Their doubtful competence, plus the shortage of radio parts, has caused many receiving stations to operate sporadically.

4. Student broadcasters. One impressive success of the Communist radio program is to be found among the students. Radio listening has been made a part of the regular school curriculum. With Communist Youth Corps members

- 207 acting as leaders, daily news items are discussed and debated until the students are found to be in favor of the Communist regime. When the news that Seoul had fallen into Allied hands was broadcast in 1951, receiving officers were directed to explain the development as a strategic necessity, not as a sign of defeat, lest the students become skeptical about the Communist slogan that "the United States is but a paper tiger." There are evidences that most of the students were convinced by this line of argument.

207 5. Propaganda. A national hookup used to
 208 support propaganda campaigns is probably the most effective means of dissemination. Co-ordinated with the press, these radio programs receive advance attention and the masses are psychologically prepared for the scheduled programs. In the Communist Land Reform Movement, this technique was employed to increase agitation against the landlords. In the "Aid-Korea" Movement and the subsequent "Germ Warfare" campaigns, students and soldiers were encouraged to broadcast their hatred of "American warmongers." One skillful propaganda twist was employed during the campaign to "oppose America's effort to revive Japanese militarism" in 1951. The Communists in East China mobilized those who had lived under Japanese occupation or had encountered Japanese troops during World War II. Japanese atrocities were publicized. Atrocities were presented as eye-witness accounts. In conclusion, all these broadcasts ended with the warning that "the United States must not be allowed to support the Japanese militarists in re-enactment of the

207 tragedies visited upon the Chinese people in
208 1937-45." Such propaganda stirred up national
resentment against both the Americans and the
Japanese. During this particular propaganda
campaign, the Communist claimed that over
three-fourths of Nanking's population were
reached by national-hookup "live" broadcasts.⁴³
Similar technique was used in the Three-Anti
and Five-Anti campaigns, when citizens were
urged to report on "corrupt officials" and in-
efficiency in government agencies. A national
survey showed that from March 1 to May 31,
1951, the forty-nine people's broadcasting sta-
tions throughout Mainland China organized 380
such nation or regional hookup broadcasts. Over
36,000,000 people were said to have listened to
the programs, and the stations received 186,000
letters, telegrams, and telephone calls as evi-
dence of the people's response.⁴⁴ Photographs are
available in Communist publications showing old
peasant women crying under a loudspeaker which
is supposedly relaying a live broadcast of the
mass trials; or a youth shouting in response to
the call for suppression of counterrevolutionaries;
or a young country girl beaming broadly upon
hearing the news of the promulgation of the
Marriage Law. These pictures, of course, may
be the opposite of what the captions claim. But
there is no denying that the Communists have
succeeded in a large measure in mastering the
art of mass persuasion and that radio is being
fully exploited in Communist China.

43. People's Pictorial, October 1951.

44. Ibid.